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Ministry of Advanced Education

B.C. INVESTS $1.2M IN TECHNOLOGY TO STUDY NEW GALAXIES

VANCOUVER – The Province is providing close to $1.2 million towards improving camera technology that will study how new stars and galaxies are formed, contributing to research about the origins of the universe, announced Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell today.

"This investment will give B.C. a competitive edge in space exploration and has enormous potential to advance our understanding of how the universe began," said Coell. "Students will have an unprecedented opportunity to learn from this research project and expand their employment opportunities in the electronics manufacturing industry."

The Province's funding will help UBC work on imaging experiments that will contribute to a project called SCUBA-2 (Submillimetre Common User Bolometer Array), the best camera in the world for mapping and studying new stars and galaxies. The imaging devices used in these experiments will be 1,000 times more powerful than current systems for capturing light from young galaxies.

This camera technology is revolutionizing the field of astronomy, allowing scientists to map and study areas of the outer space that have not been studied before. Researchers will use the imaging devices to determine whether stars formed gradually or mainly in sudden bursts during the early history of the universe.

"We are very excited to be a part of this groundbreaking initiative," said Stephen Toope, president of UBC. "With the Province's generous contribution, we will be able to reach new heights in the field of space exploration. The research from this project will showcase B.C.'s talent and provide us with the opportunities to participate in many more experiments to come."

UBC researchers are part of an international team from the UK, Canada, the USA, Holland, and Japan that are building and using these cameras. UBC will participate in several experiments studying star formation and cosmology, providing the electronics that control the imaging devices, record the data and produce images from it.

The Province's investment comes from the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund, which provides capital funding for research equipment and facilities for public post-secondary institutions, teaching hospitals and affiliated non-profit agencies. The SCUBA-2 project also receives support from the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

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Since 2001, a total of 487 projects and over $288 million in funding have been approved by the provincial government under the British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund. This funding has leveraged $311 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and another $250 million from other non-provincial government sources, for a total investment in British Columbia's research infrastructure of almost $850 million.

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